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In the Claims

APR 18 2007

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Previously presented) A method for cross marketing products between a first company and a second company engaged in a bilateral cross-marketing relationship, the method performed over an interconnected plurality of point-of-sale terminals and a server, and comprising the steps of:

establishing a parameter of the cross-marketing relationship by mutual consent of the first and second companies, the parameter including a discount on a second product offered by the second company, the discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a purchase of a first product offered for sale by the first company;

at the first company, identifying a straight sale that includes the purchase of the first product by a particular consumer at a first point-of-sale terminal, granting the discount and storing an indication of the purchase of the first product in a database on the server;

at the second company, receiving a request from the particular consumer for the second product, querying the database to determine that the particular consumer has purchased the first product from the first company, providing the discount on the second product, and updating the database to reflect the providing;

based on the first product being a cross-marketed product, calculating and recording an amount of cross-marketing revenue realized from a predetermined portion of the cost of the straight sale to a marketing fund account in the database; and

based on the providing of the discount, allocating at least a portion of the cross-marketing revenue and a predetermined portion of the cost of the discount in the fund to reimburse the second company for the discount.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the discount is a 100 percent discount.

3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the discount is less than 100 percent.

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the granting comprises:
crediting an account of the consumer with the discount.
5. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[3]] 1, further comprising the step of :
notifying the consumer of the discount.
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)
8. (Canceled)
9. (Canceled)
10. (Canceled)
11. (Canceled)
12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
establishing a further parameter of a cross-marketing relationship between a third company and the second company by mutual consent of the second and third companies, the further parameter including a second discount on the second product, the second discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a purchase of a third product offered for sale by the third company; and
at the second company, standing ready to provide the first and second discounts.
13. (Previously presented) A method for cross marketing products between a first company and a second company engaged in a bilateral cross-marketing relationship, the method performed over an interconnected plurality of electronic sales terminals and a server, and comprising the steps of:

establishing a parameter of the cross-marketing relationship by mutual consent of the first and second companies, the parameter including a discount on a second product offered by the second company, the discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a purchase of a first product offered for sale by the first company;

at the first company, recognizing a straight sale that includes the purchase of the first product at one of the plurality of electronic sales terminals by a consumer and granting the discount;

crediting an account of the consumer maintained at the server with the discount;
notifying the consumer of the discount; and

based on a providing of the discount to the consumer, depositing a predetermined amount of money into a marketing fund account maintained at the server for the benefit of the second company in at least partial compensation for providing the discount; and

at the second company, receiving a request from the consumer for the second product, and standing ready to provide the discount,

wherein the amount of money deposited into the marketing fund account includes a predetermined percentage of revenue realized from the purchase of the first product and a predetermined percentage of the cost of the discount.

14. (Previously presented) The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

establishing a further parameter of a cross-marketing relationship between a third company and the second company by mutual consent of the second and third companies, the further parameter including a second discount on the second product, the second discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a purchase of a third product offered for sale by the third company; and

at the second company, selling the second product, and providing the discount and the second discount.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously presented) A method for cross marketing products between a first department and a second department at a company using an electronic sales terminal and a server coupled by an electronic communications link, wherein the first and second departments are engaged in a bilateral cross-marketing relationship, the method comprising the steps of:

establishing a parameter of the cross-marketing relationship by mutual consent of the first and second departments, the parameter including a discount on a second product offered by the second department, the discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a purchase of a first product offered for sale by the first department;

at the first department, recognizing a straight sale that includes the purchase of the first product at a first one of a plurality of sales terminals by a consumer and granting the discount;

crediting an account of the consumer maintained on the server with the discount;

notifying the consumer of the discount;

based on a providing of the discount to the consumer, depositing a predetermined amount of money into a marketing fund account maintained on the server for the benefit of the second department in at least partial compensation for providing the discount; and

at the second department, receiving a request from the consumer for the second product, and standing ready to provide the discount at the same or a different one of the plurality of sales terminals on the second product, wherein the money deposited into the marketing fund account for the benefit of the second department amounts to a predetermined percentage of revenue realized from the purchase of the first product and a predetermined percentage of the cost of the discount.

17. (Previously presented) A method for cross marketing products between a first company and a second company engaged in a bilateral cross-marketing relationship, the method performed over an interconnected plurality of point-of-sale terminals and a server, and comprising the steps of:

establishing a parameter of the cross-marketing relationship by mutual consent of the first and second companies, the parameter including a discount on a second product offered by the second company, the discount contingent upon a condition at least partially satisfied by a

purchase of a first product offered for sale by the first company; and

at the first company:

identifying a straight sale that includes the purchase of the first product by a particular consumer at a first point-of-sale terminal;

sending first purchase data identifying at least the first product from the first point-of-sale terminal in substantially real-time to the server;

determining at the server that the first purchase data identifies a cross-marketed product for which the parameter has been established;

based on the first product being a cross-marketed product, granting a promotional discount value to an account associated with the particular consumer, the promotional discount value contributing towards satisfying the discount condition;

providing an indication of the promotional discount value on a receipt issued to the consumer for the straight sale; and

recording an amount of cross-marketing revenue realized from the straight sale to a marketing fund account, wherein the marketing fund account is structured to defray the second company's costs in dispensing products in conjunction with a first promotional discount value earned by the purchase of the first company's products, and the first company's costs in dispensing products in conjunction with a second promotional discount value earned by the purchase of the second company's products.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously presented) The method in claim 17, wherein the server further includes a marketing engine.

20. (Previously presented) The method in claim 17, further comprising:

identifying a purchase of the second product by the particular customer from the second company at a second point-of-sale terminal;

sending second purchase data identifying at least the second product from the second

point of sale terminal in substantially real-time to the server;

comparing the particular customer account's stored promotional discount value with a redemption threshold on the server, the threshold value satisfying the condition; and

if the consumer account's stored promotional discount value is at least equal to the threshold value, then permitting the consumer to redeem the discount.

21. (Previously presented) The method in claim 17, wherein the promotional discount value comprises a predetermined number of award points.

22. (Previously presented) The method in claim 17, wherein the amount recorded into the marketing fund comprises a predetermined percentage of the revenue realized from the straight sale.

23. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 17, further including receiving a consumer account inquiry from a consumer at a point-of-sale terminal at the store of a company participating in the cross-marketing.

24. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 17, further comprising receiving a consumer's unique identification number at the beginning of a sales transaction or a consumer account inquiry transaction.

25. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 17, wherein the server is an in-store server.

26. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 17, wherein the server comprises an out-of-store external server.

27. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 1, wherein if a further product is purchased from the second company in combination with the providing of the discount, a predetermined portion of the cost of the further product is contributed to the marketing fund account for the

benefit of the first company, the purchase of the further product constituting an incremental referral sale.

28. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 13, wherein if a further product is purchased from the second company in combination with the providing of the discount, a predetermined portion of the cost of the further product is contributed to the marketing fund account for the benefit of the first company, the purchase of the further product constituting an incremental referral sale.

29. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 16, wherein if a further product is purchased from the second company in combination with the providing of the discount, a predetermined portion of the cost of the further product is contributed to the marketing fund account for the benefit of the first company, the purchase of the further product constituting an incremental referral sale.

30. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 17, wherein if a further product is purchased from the second company in combination with the providing of the discount, a predetermined portion of the cost of the further product is contributed to the marketing fund account for the benefit of the first company, the purchase of the further product constituting an incremental referral sale.